

grievances of soldiers could be intimated to the concerned ZSB by the unit commander and regular monitoring by the units and the nearest army unit/HQrs.

Protection of Indian fishermen by Coast Guard

1536. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Coast Guard has increased patrolling on the west coast to protect Indian fishermen;

(b) what steps the Coast Guard would take to advise and caution Indian fishermen from straying near the waters of India's neighbours;

(c) whether Coast Guards has convened any meeting with Indian fishermen and fishing sector and deep-sea fishing companies to increase co-operation; and

(d) the steps proposed by the Coast Guard to become accessible to the Indian fishery sector and to help them?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (d) The Indian Coast Guard carries out round the clock surveillance of the India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) which includes monitoring of the operations of all fishing vessels along the west coast. Protecting our fishermen and guiding them in the areas near the borders of other countries is an important task that is included in the Charter of Duties of Indian Coast Guard.

Indian fishermen are regularly advised to keep clear of the International Maritime Boundary Line by at least five nautical miles, to avoid interception and apprehension by the security forces of other countries. In addition, community interaction programmes are organized at frequent intervals along the coastal villages on the west coast to educate fishermen community on issues like, safety at sea, search and rescue procedure, use of available communication, safety equipments at sea. The Coast Guard is also advising deep sea fishing companies to operate as per the conditions of Letter of Permit (LOP) issued by the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India. For better accessibility the Coast Guard has provided a toll free telephone number 155211 for search and rescue assistance to fishermen at sea.